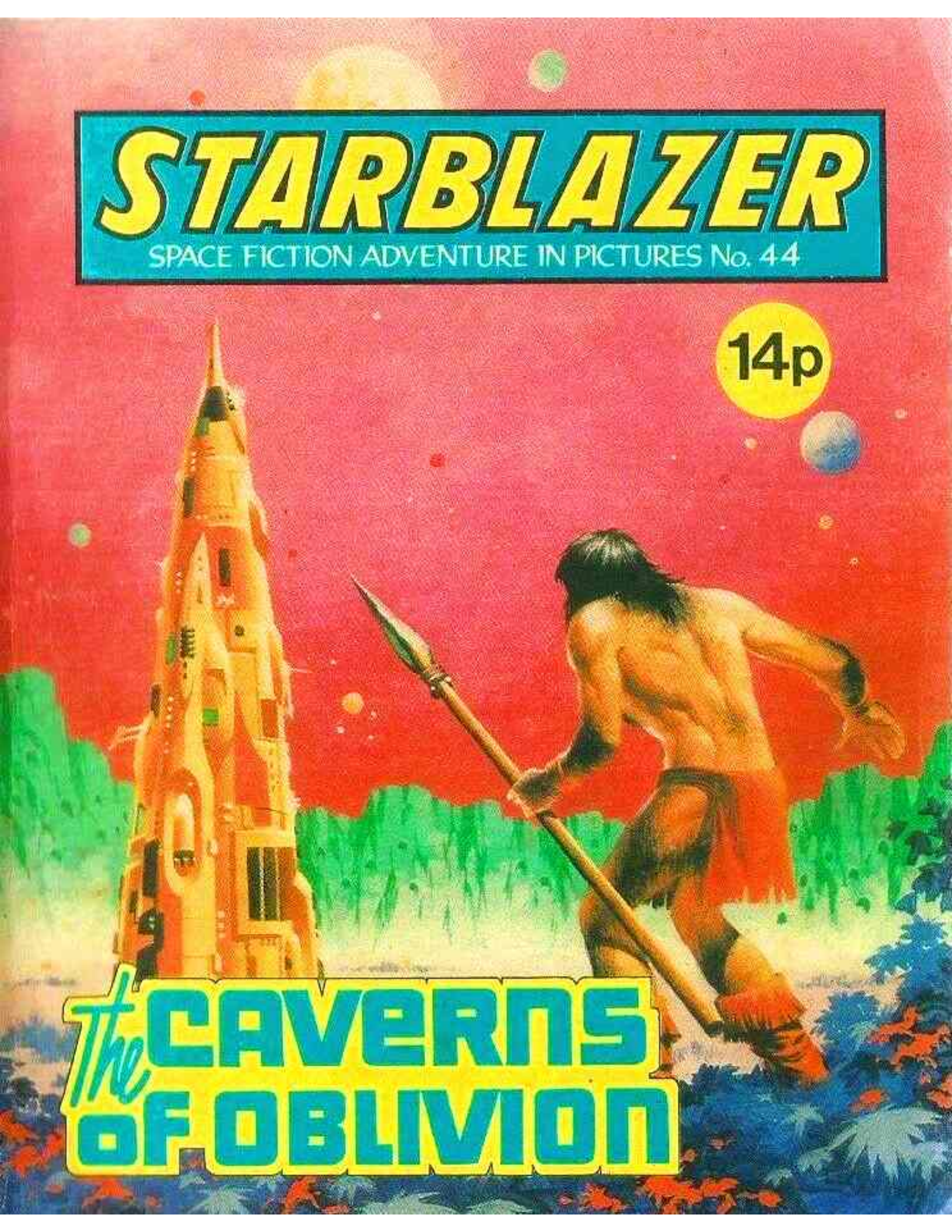
STARBLAZER

SPACE FICTION ADVENTURE IN PICTURES No. 44

14p

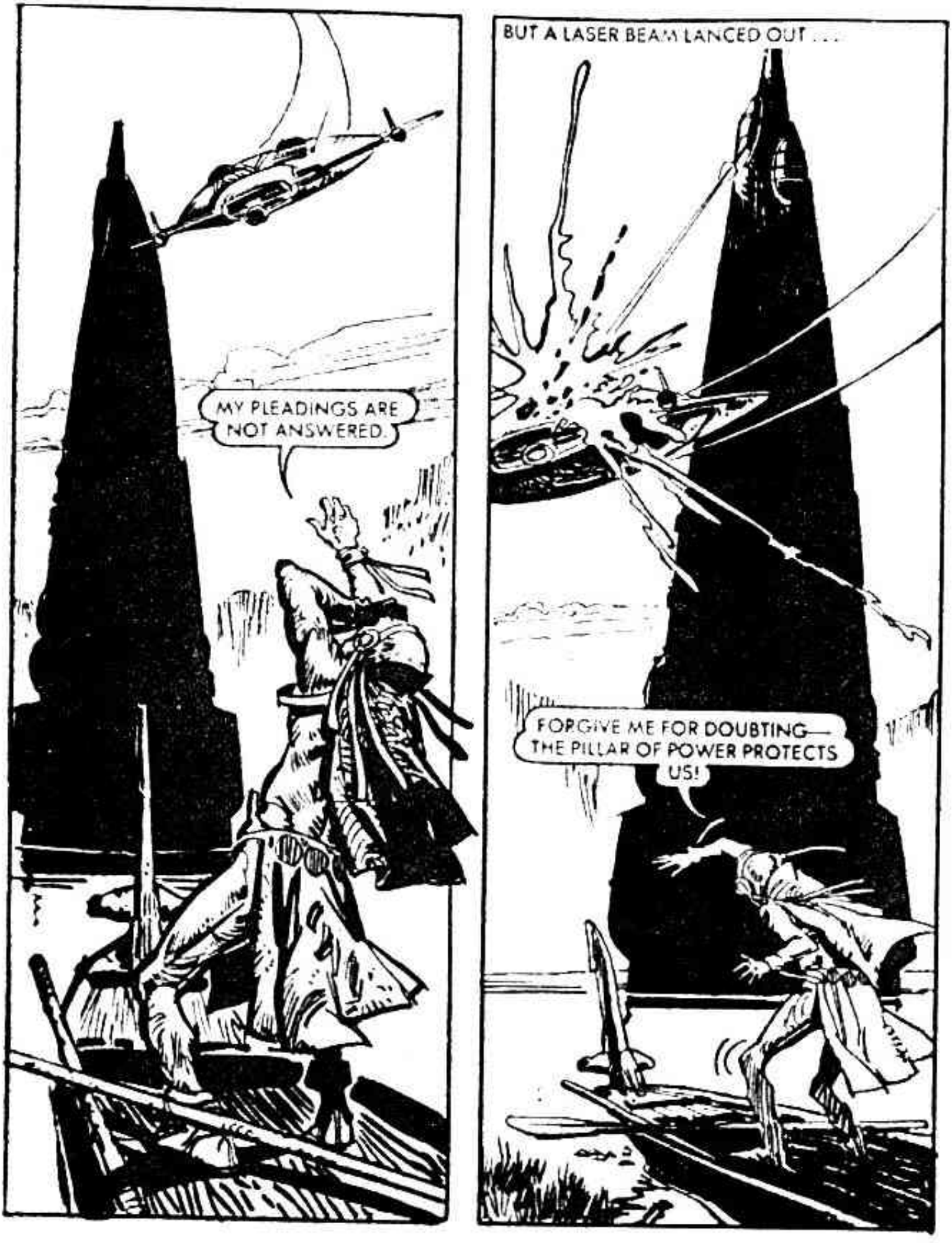


the CAVERNS OF OBLIVION

THE PLANET OF TANNO LAY IN THE LARGELY UNCHARTED STAR FIELD BETWEEN TERRAN FEDERATION SPACE AND THE KROGG SYSTEM. IT WAS A STRATEGIC POINT IN THE TERRAN BATTLE WITH THE KROGG. MIGHTY STELLAR BATTLE FLEETS MANOEUVRED IN SPACE NEAR TANNO AS EACH SIDE STROVE FOR A POSITION OF ADVANTAGE.

NO ONE CARED MUCH ABOUT THE PRIMITIVE NATIVES OF TANNO, UNTIL ONE DAY A STRANGER CAME AND FOUND THE ULTIMATE WEAPON IN THEIR CAVERNS OF OBLIVION.

The CAVERNS of OBLIVION
GREAT PILLAR OF ALL POWER, KEEP US SAFE FROM THE MACHINES OF WAR . . .
BY THE LIGHT OF AN ALIEN DAWN, THE LORD OF THE TANNO ASKED FOR PROTECTION FROM THE CRAFT THAT FREQUENTLY STRAFFED THE PLANET.

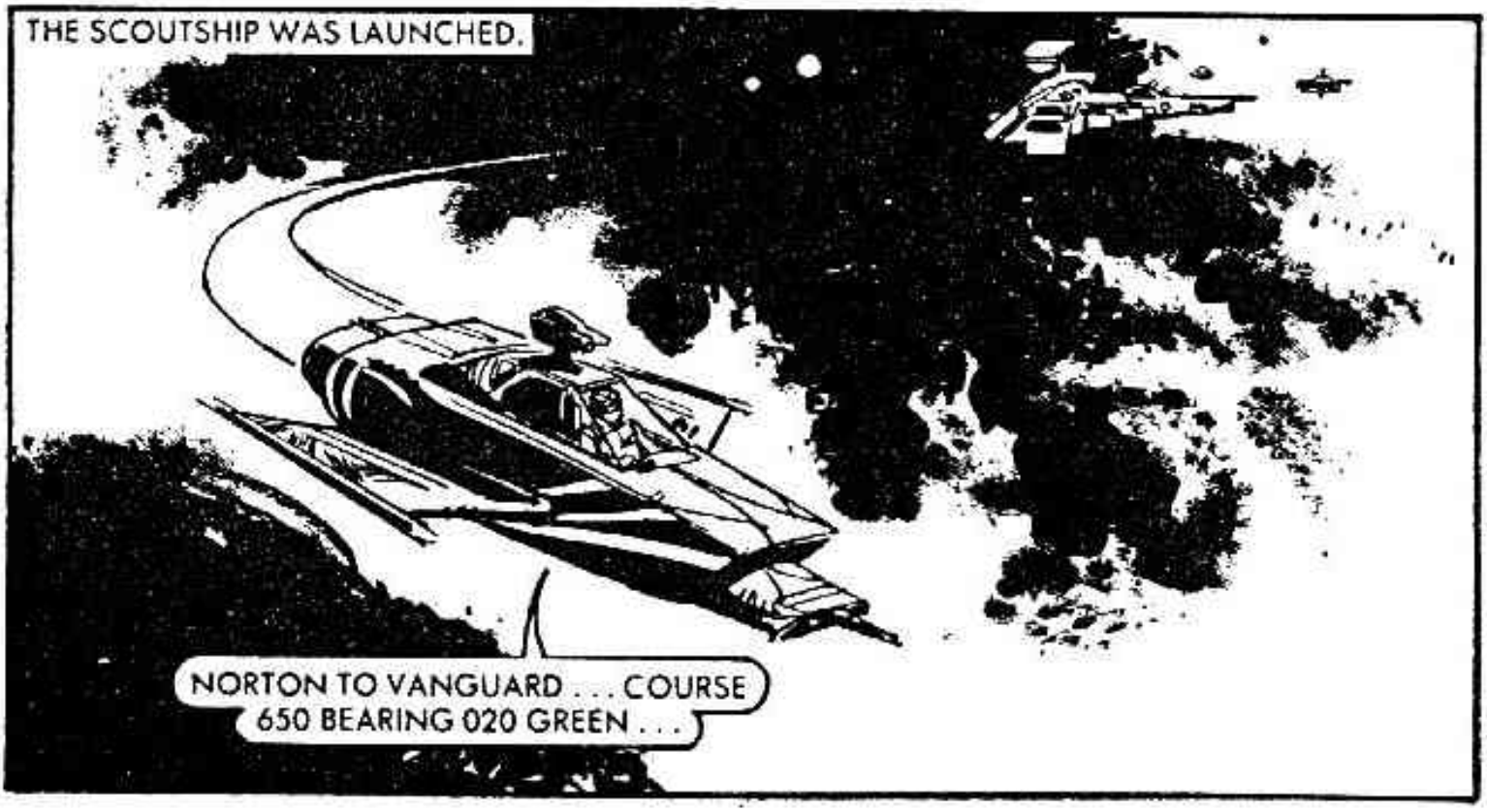

MY PLEADINGS ARE NOT ANSWERED.
BUT A LASER BEAM LANCED OUT . . .
FORGIVE ME FOR DOUBTING— THE PILLAR OF POWER PROTECTS US!

eldubya/lodinegr

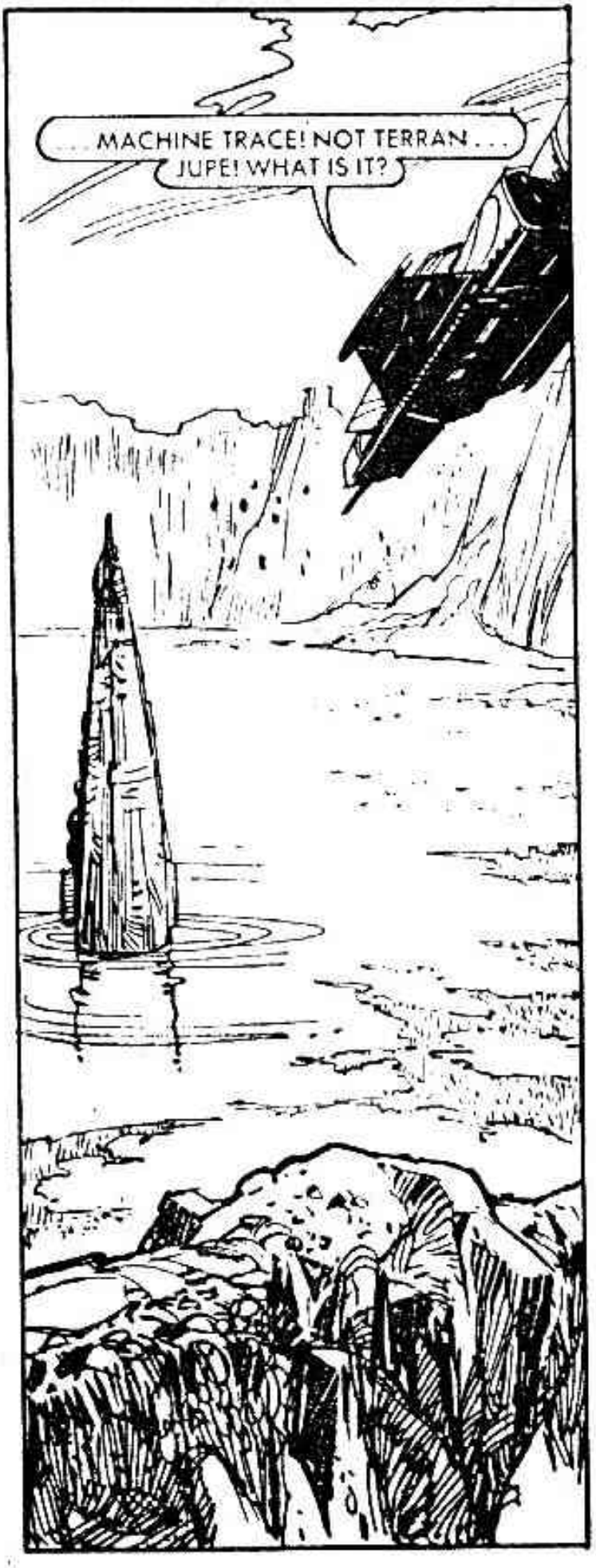
ON THE FRINGES OF TANNO SPACE, A TERRAN SPACE PATROL HAD BEEN MONITORING THE DESTROYED CRAFT.
SIR, WE HAVE A SPY PROBE MALFUNCTION —THE SIGNALS JUST STOPPED LOW OVER TANNO.

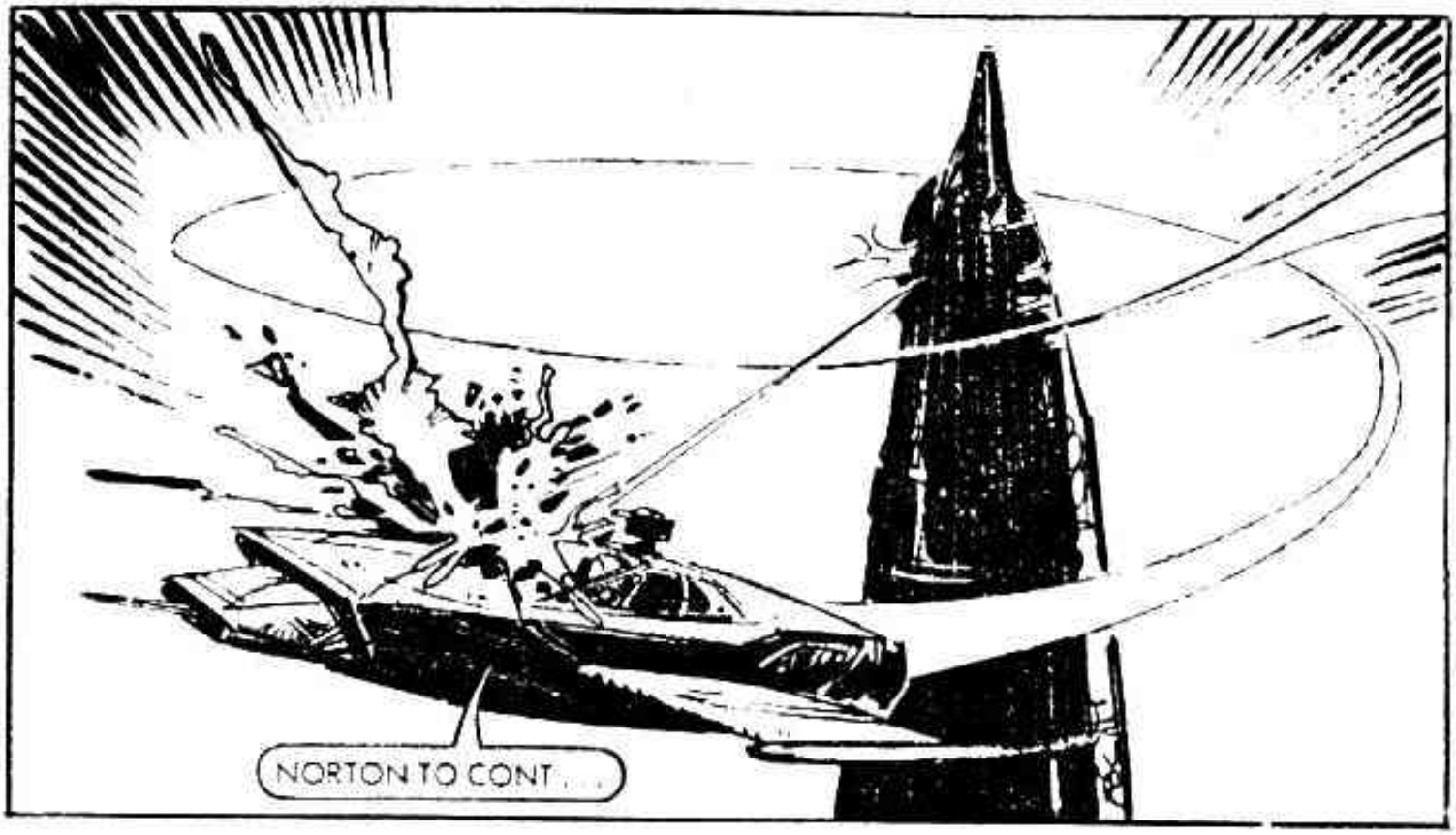
ALL CHANNELS ARE COMPLETELY DEAD, SIR.
SEND IN A SCOUTSHIP TO INVESTIGATE.

THE SCOUTSHIP PILOT, JIM NORTON, RECEIVED HIS ORDERS.
I JUST WANT INFORMATION, NORTON. GET IN, ASSESS THE SITUATION, AND GET BACK HERE . . . UNDERSTAND?
YES, SIR.


THE SCOUTSHIP WAS LAUNCHED.
NORTON TO VANGUARD . . . COURSE 650 BEARING 020 GREEN . . .

THE SCOUTSHIP ENTERED TANNO'S ATMOSPHERE AT HIGH SPEED.
THE PLANET LOOKS QUIET ENOUGH. NO MACHINE TRACES YET . . .


. . . MACHINE TRACE! NOT TERRAN . . .
JUPE! WHAT IS IT?


NORTON TO CONT . . .

ALL SYSTEMS OUT . . . NOT EVEN TIME TO SEND A DISTRESS CALL.

ALIEN EYES WATCHED JIM'S SCOUTSHIP PLUNGE OUT OF CONTROL.
SLIGHT RESPONSE ON DRAG-VANES. COME ON MY BEAUTY.

THE DRAG-VANES LIFTED THE NOSE OF THE CRAFT JUST ENOUGH TO PREVENT A FATAL IMPACT.

I'M STILL IN ONE PIECE.

eldubya/iodineprie

WHAT THE . . .
A PUNGENT GAS SENT JIM INSTANTLY INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS.

eldubya/todineplies

JIM AWOKE HOURS LATER.

JIM'S TRANSLATOR PACK PICKED UP A CURIOUS LANGUAGE, RAPIDLY ANALYSED IT, AND BEGAN TO TRANSLATE.
THE PILLAR OF POWER WILL FEED FROM THIS LIFE FORM.

INTO THE CAVERNS OF OBLIVION WITH THE DEFILER.

JIM HURTLED DOWN A SMOOTH-SIDED SHAFT.

WITH A BONE-JARRING THUD HIS DESCENT ABRUPTLY ENDED.

THIS IS A BAD DREAM . . .
JIM'S IMMENSE STRENGTH MADE SHORT WORK OF THE MANACLES.

I'VE GOT TO GET FREE! SOUNDS LIKE SOMEONE'S COMING.

eldubya/lodineppies

join our starforums!

IT WON'T LET GO . . . UNLESS . . .

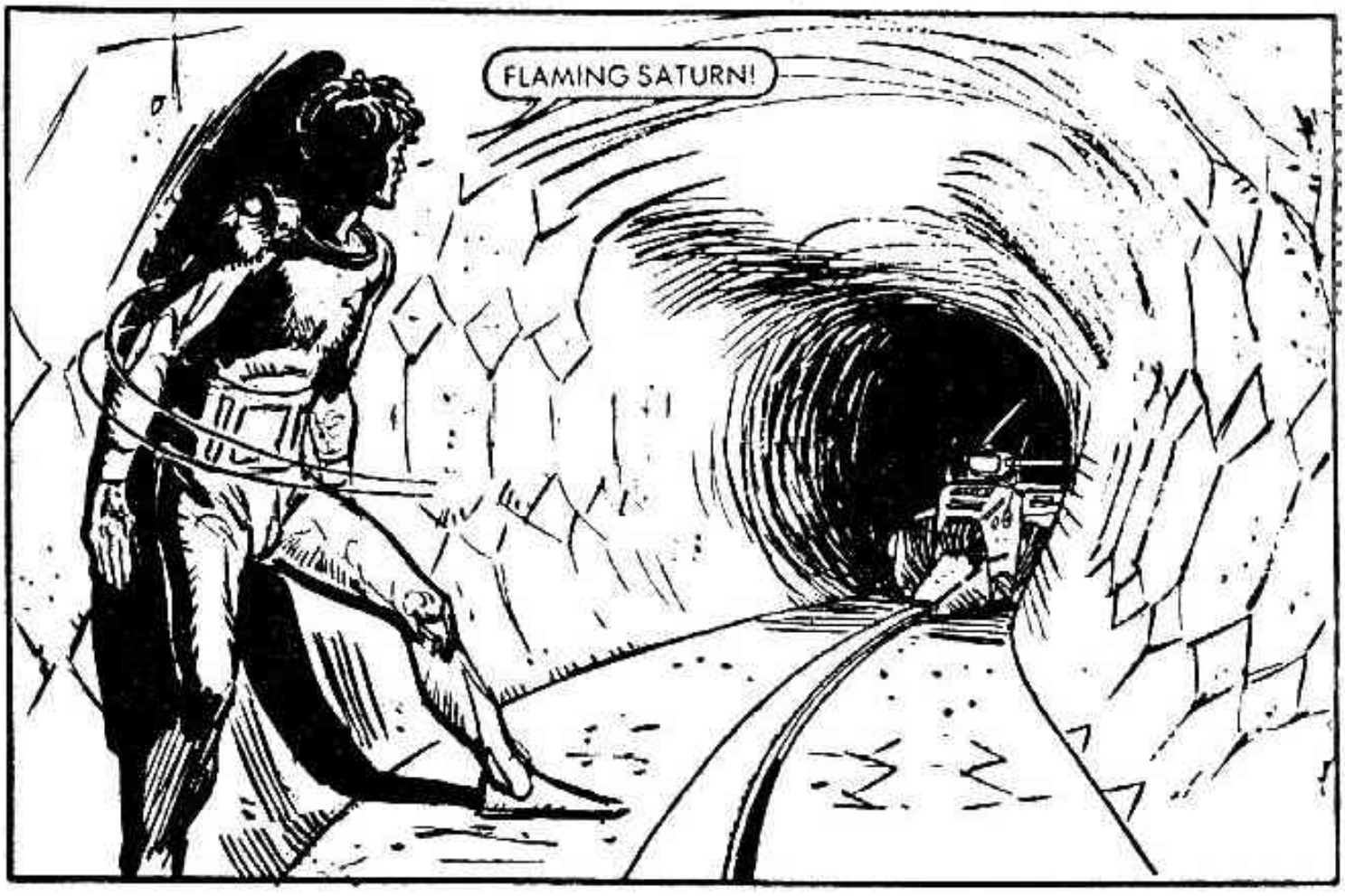
THAT'S SLOWED IT DOWN.

join our starforums!

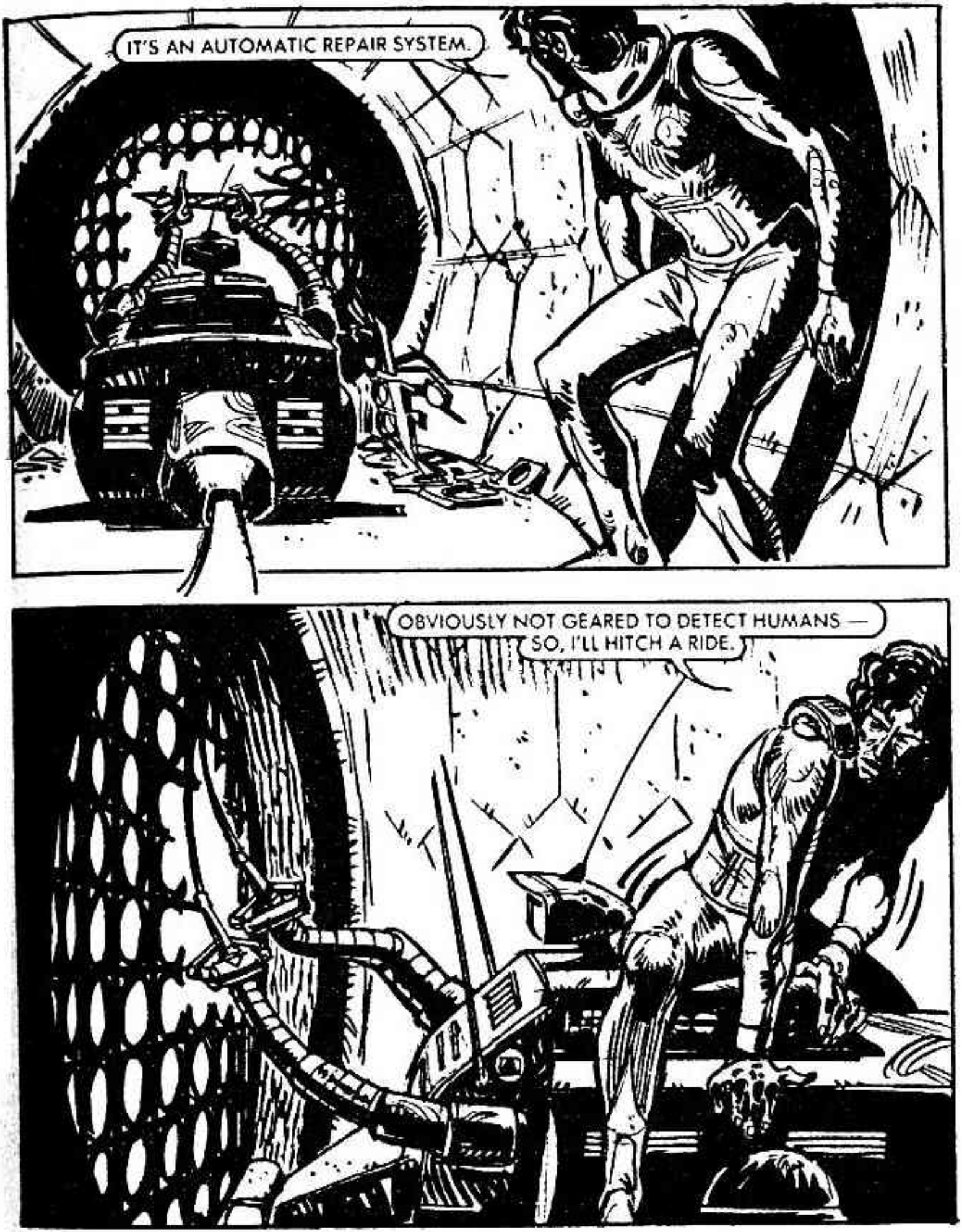
STRANGE! THE TANNO COULDN'T HAVE BUILT THIS.

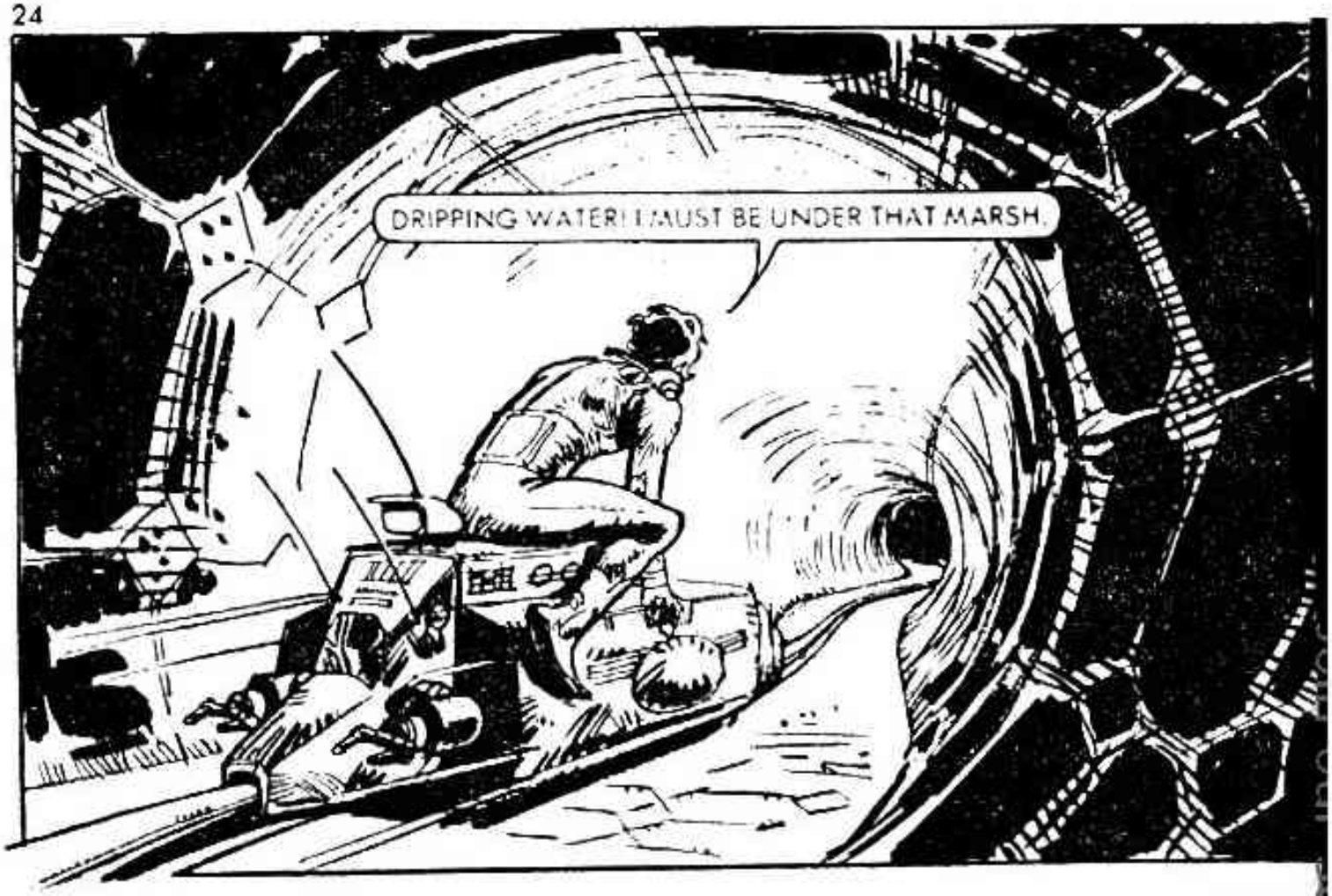
LET'S SEE WHO OR WHAT'S BEHIND IT!

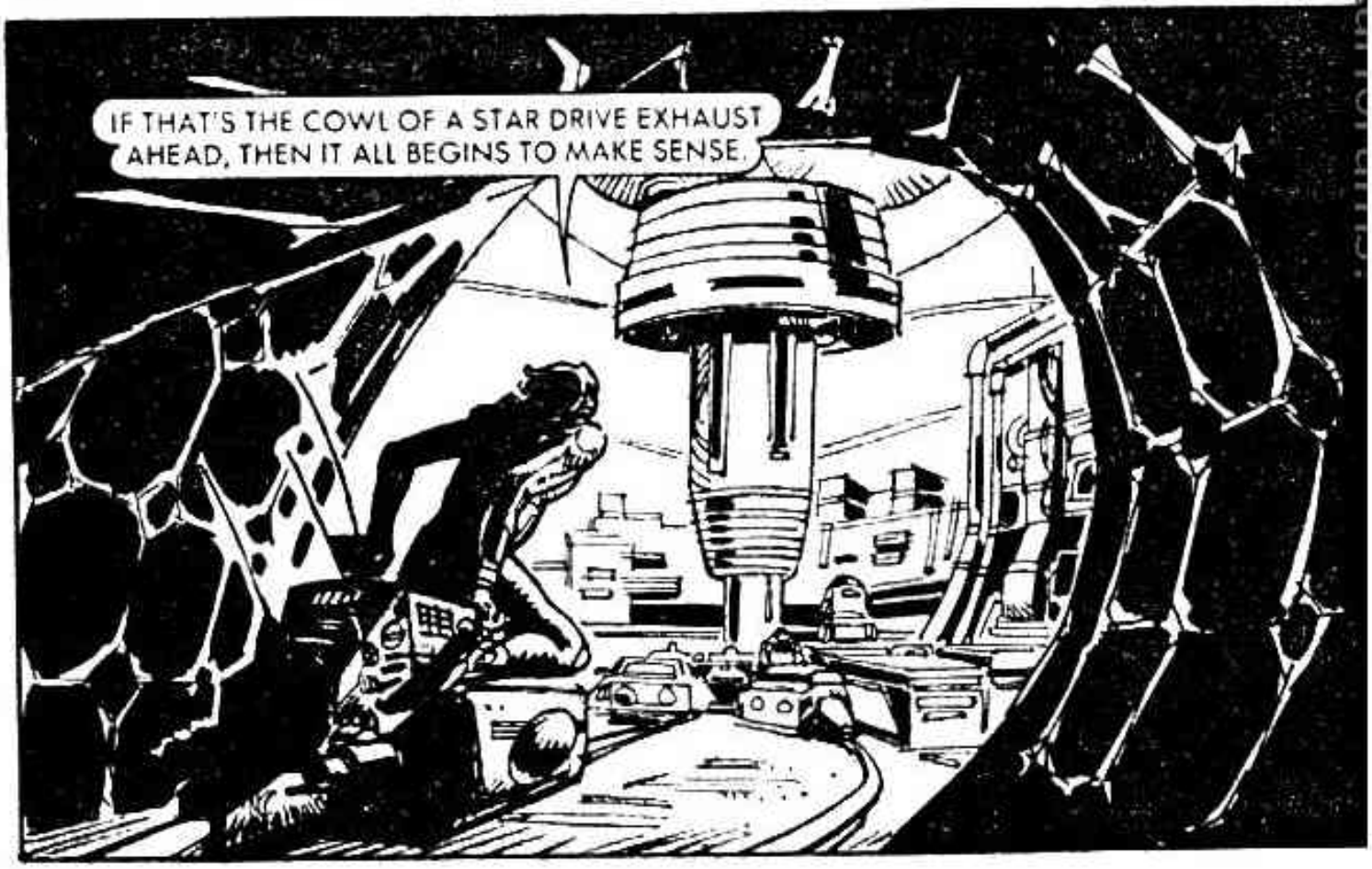
A MONORAIL TUNNEL . . . THIS IS ADVANCED TECHNOLOGICAL STUFF. WHAT'S IT DOING HERE?


FLAMING SATURN!

eldubya/iodinepr

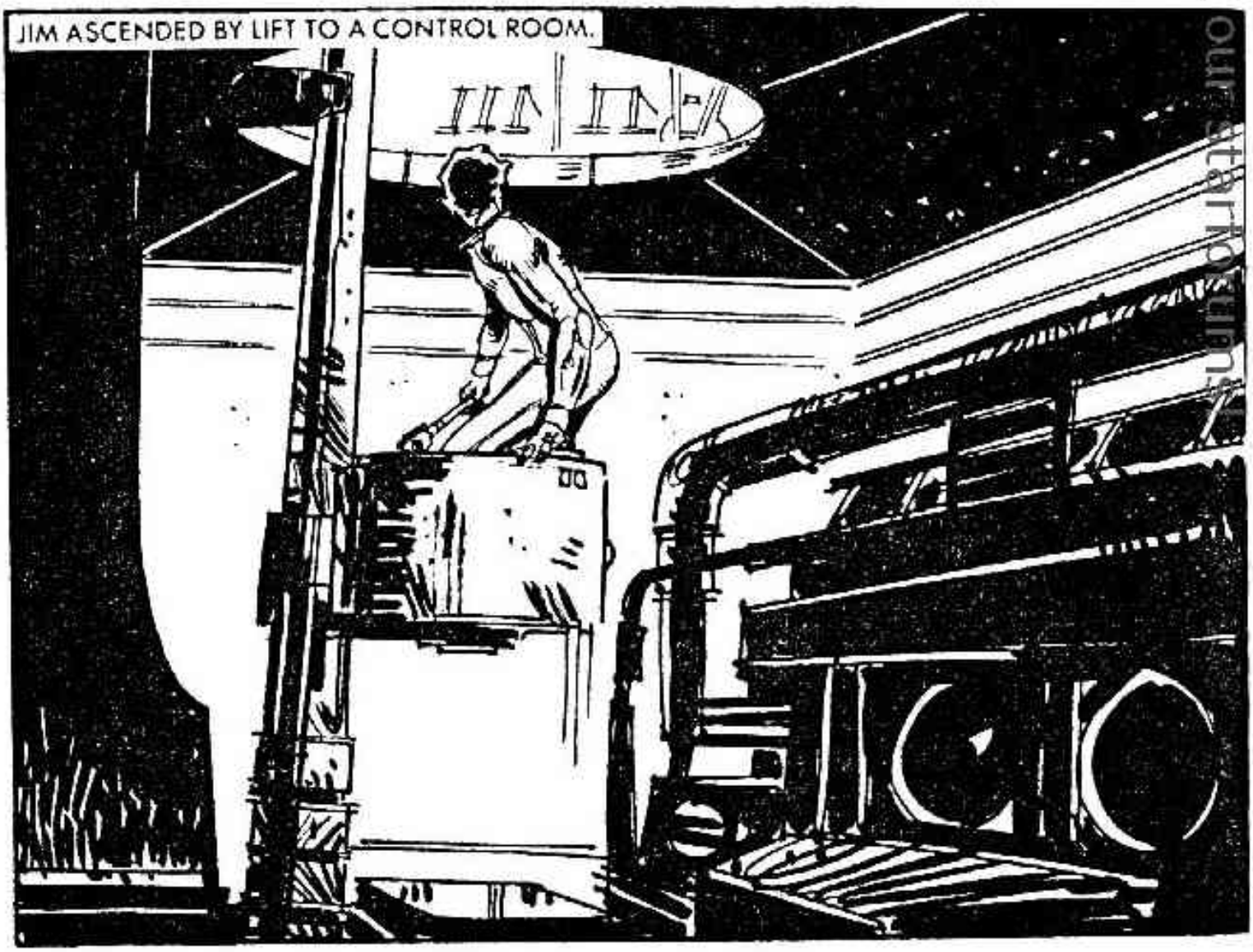



DRIPPING WATER! I MUST BE UNDER THAT MARSH.


IF THAT'S THE COWL OF A STAR DRIVE EXHAUST AHEAD, THEN IT ALL BEGINS TO MAKE SENSE.

JIM PIECED THINGS TOGETHER . . .
OF COURSE! THE OBELISK IS A HALF SUBMERGED STARSHIP. THIS IS THE DRIVE AND THAT PIPE I CAME DOWN IS AN AIR INTAKE.

COME ABOARD, LIFE FORM. I HAVE BEEN WAITING A LONG TIME FOR YOU!
W-WHAT THE . . . !

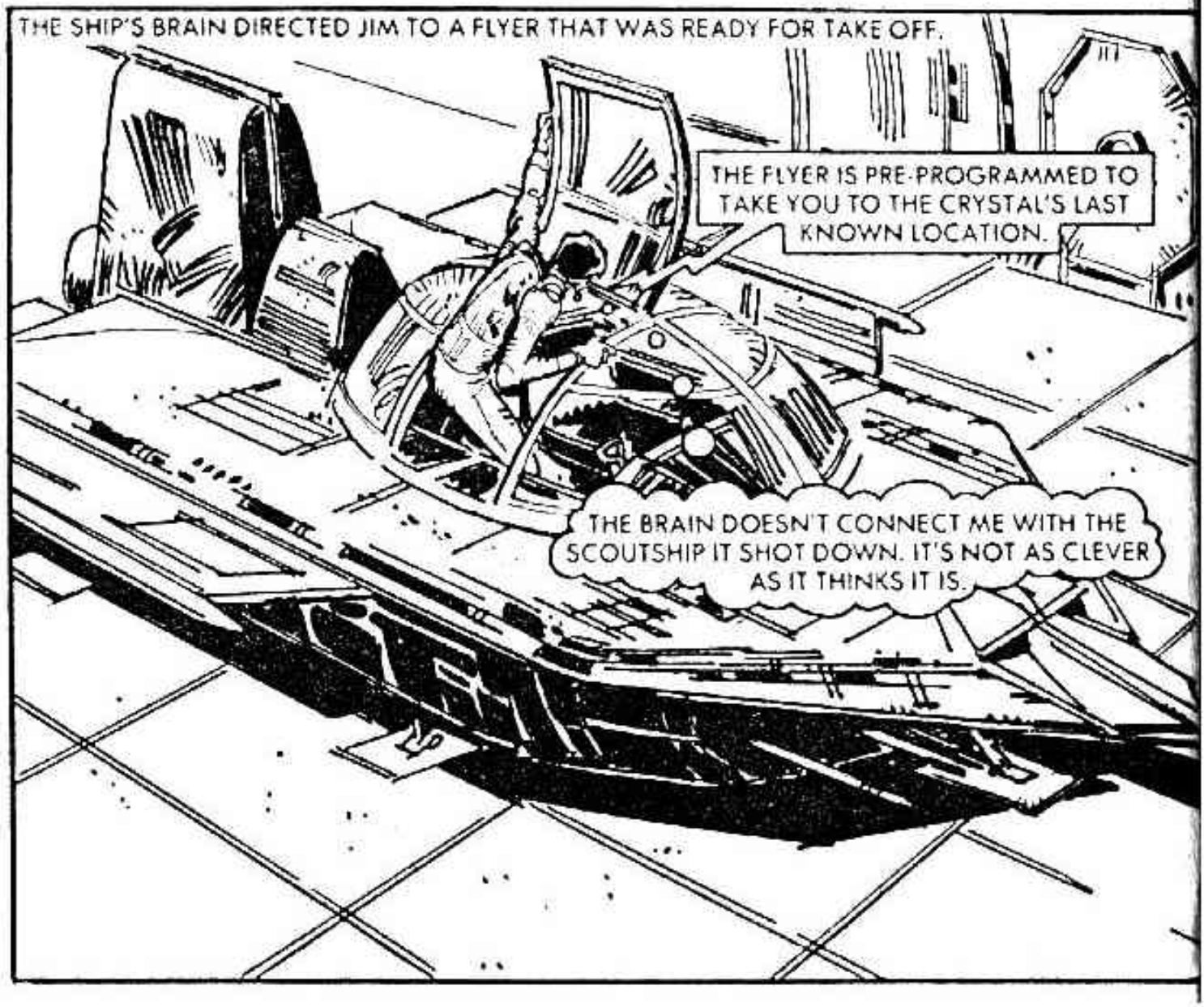


Join our star routine!

eldubya/lodinepri

A SHIP LIKE THIS WOULD BE A USEFUL ADDITION TO THE TERRAN BATTLE FLEET.
LISTEN TO MY INSTRUCTIONS, LIFE FORM. YOU WILL RECOVER A CRYSTAL WHICH I NEED FOR FULFILMENT OF MY PROGRAMMED PURPOSE.

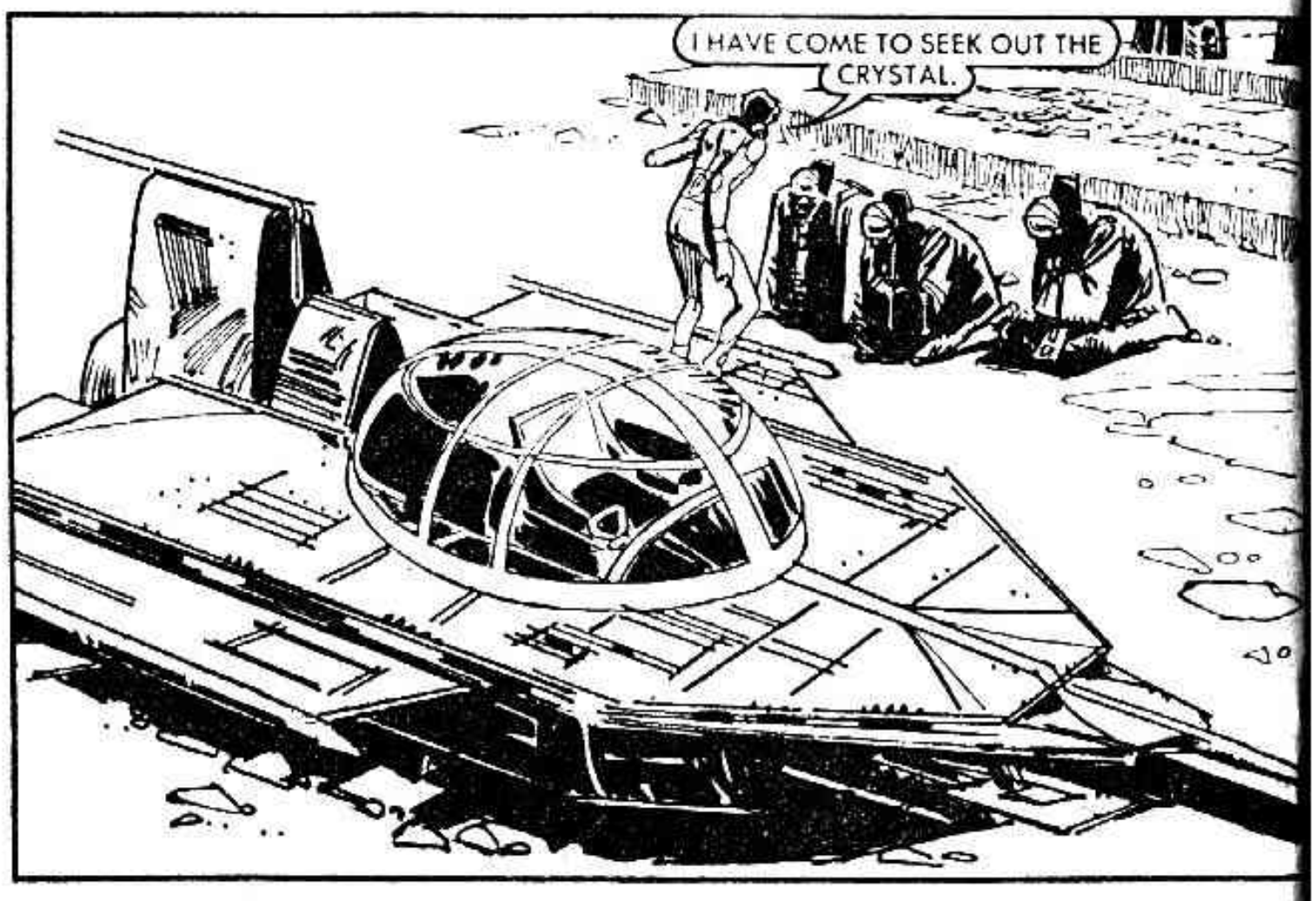
IT IS THE LINK FOR MY STARDRIVE CIRCUITS. ALL ATTEMPTS AT RECOVERY HAVE FAILED. A LIFE-FORM HAS MARGINAL SUCCESS PROBABILITY.
WHERE DO I START?


THE SHIP'S BRAIN DIRECTED JIM TO A FLYER THAT WAS READY FOR TAKE OFF.
THE FLYER IS PRE-PROGRAMMED TO TAKE YOU TO THE CRYSTAL'S LAST KNOWN LOCATION.
THE BRAIN DOESN'T CONNECT ME WITH THE SCOUTSHIP IT SHOT DOWN. IT'S NOT AS CLEVER AS IT THINKS IT IS.

ONCE I HAVE THE CRYSTAL, I'LL ACTIVATE THE MANUAL OVERRIDE.

THE FLYER TRAVELLED BEYOND THE STONE-AGE CAVERNS OF OBLIVION UNTIL IT CAME TO AN ORNATE TEMPLE.
I DON'T BELIEVE IT! A PYRAMID.

THE FLYER HAS RETURNED. WE MUST TELL THE CRYSTAL KEEPER.


I HAVE COME TO SEEK OUT THE CRYSTAL.

eldubyafiodineprie

JIM'S TRANSLATOR PACK ADAPTED AUTOMATICALLY TO THE NEW DIALECT.
YOU SEEM TO BE EXPECTING ME.
THE CRYSTAL BEARER CHARGED US TO BE ETERNALLY VIGILANT.

I'D LIKE TO MEET THE ONE WHO BROUGHT THE CRYSTAL HERE.
HE HAS BEEN DEAD FOR A MILLENIA!

THEN I RIGHTFULLY CLAIM THE CRYSTAL.
YOU ARE NOT A TRUE SKY ONE!

eldubya/lodinepie

JIM EVENTUALLY RECOVERED CONSCIOUSNESS.
THIS IS GETTING TO BE A HABIT. THIS WHOLE PLACE IS STRANGE . . . . . THAT ELECTRONIC BRAIN HAS BEEN STRANDED HERE FOR A THOUSAND YEARS.

I MUST ASSUME THE CRYSTAL STEALER HAS BEEN DEAD FOR 1,000 YEARS, SO WHOEVER HE HID FROM MUST BE DEAD AS WELL. THERE'S NO LONGER ANY REASON FOR PROTECTING IT.
OUR DUTY PASSES TO EACH GENERATION. WE MUST PROTECT THE CRYSTAL.

NOW YOU MUST UNDERGO THE RITUAL OF DEATH.

THE RITUAL DEMANDS THAT YOU CONTEST FOR POSSESSION OF THE CRYSTAL WITH OUR CHAMPION.

DIE!

NOT YET. THANK YOU.
WE'RE ALMOST EVEN NOW.

eldubya/fodineon

IF I DON'T GET THAT CRYSTAL I'LL BE STRANDED HERE FOR EVER!

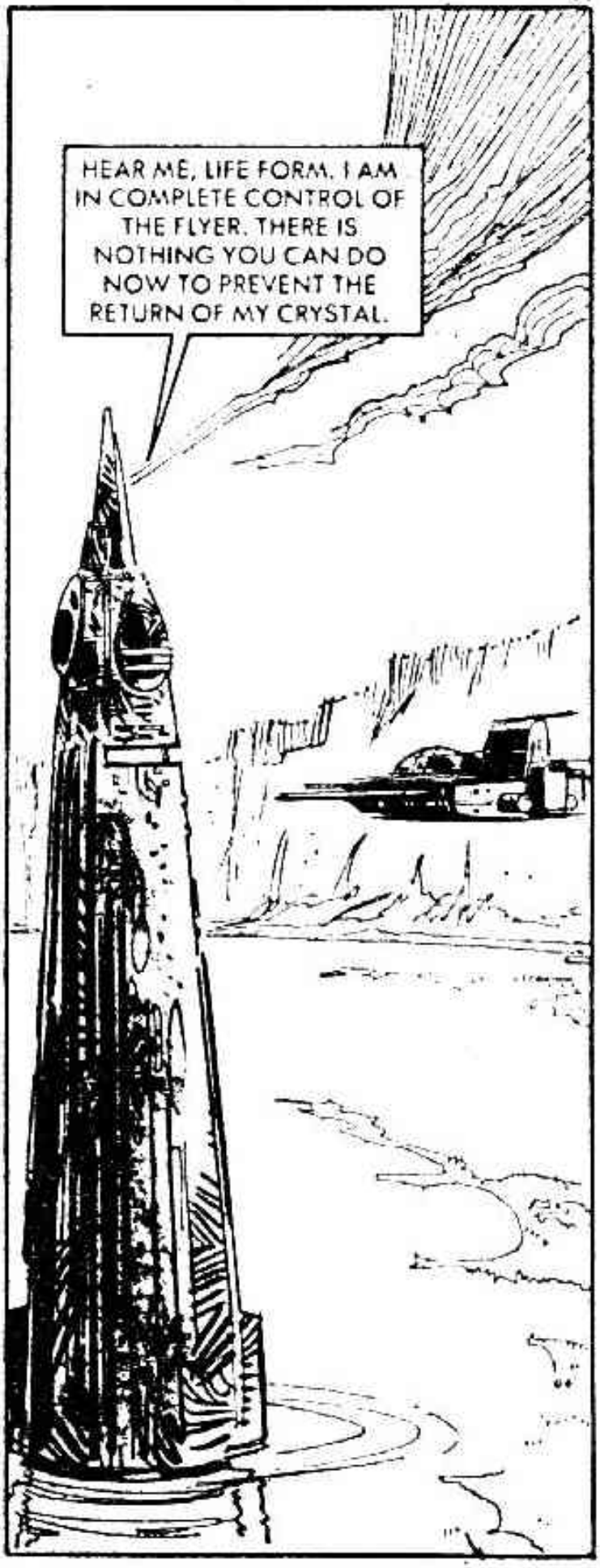
I WANT SAFE PASSAGE TO MY FLYER OR YOU'RE NEXT.
SO BE IT. WE CANNOT FIGHT THE RESULT OF THE RITUAL.

NOW TO GET AWAY FROM THIS MAD PLACE.
MY FIRST PRIORITY NOW IS TO FIND SOMETHING ON THAT STARSHIP WHICH WILL PUT ME IN TOUCH WITH THE ADMIRAL.

THE AUTO-PILOT OF THIS THING WILL GET ME BACK TO THE STARSHIP, THEN I'LL TRY TO TAKE OVER FROM THAT ELECTRONIC BRAIN.

YOU WILL GO BACK TO THE TEMPLE OR I WILL SLICE YOU INTO PIECES . . .

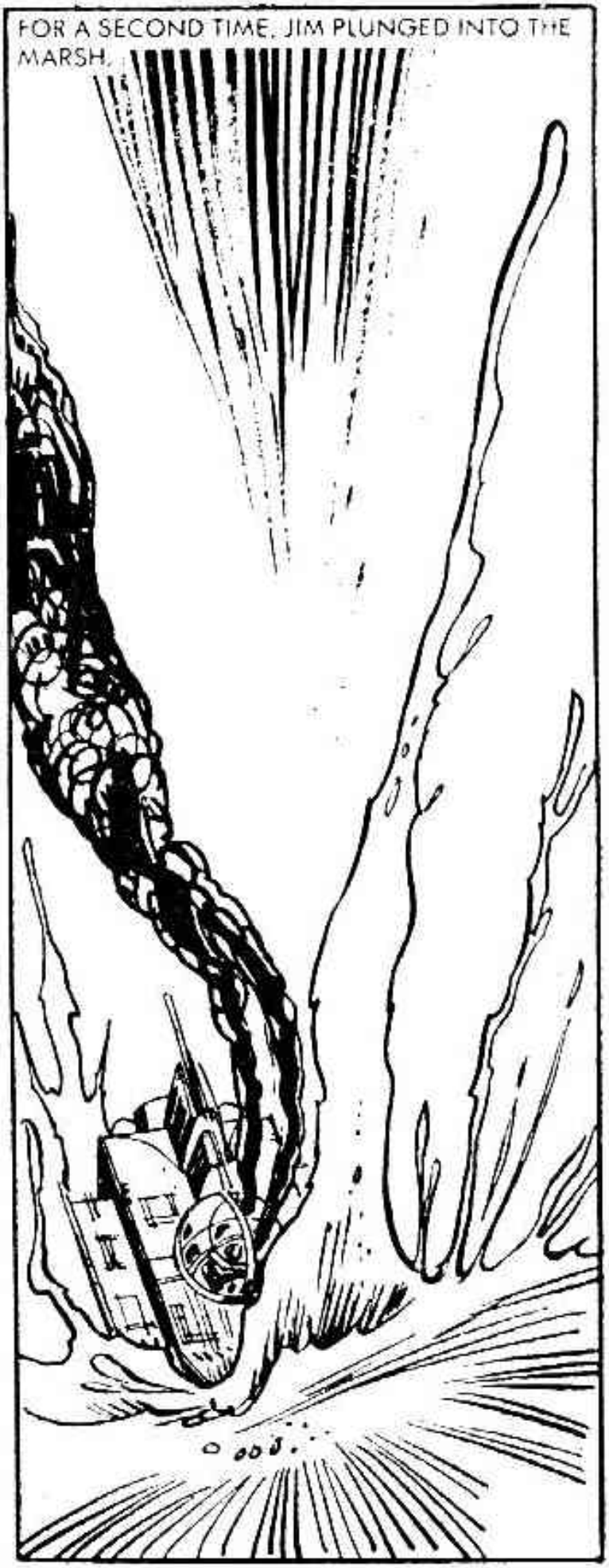
eldubya/lodinepri



THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO NOW TO MAKE US TURN BACK.
THE CRYSTAL MUST BE PROTECTED. I WILL FIGHT THIS FLYING THING.

THAT'S BLOWN EVERY FUSE IN THIS THING.

eldubya/iodinepi



THAT WARRIOR IS DEAD.

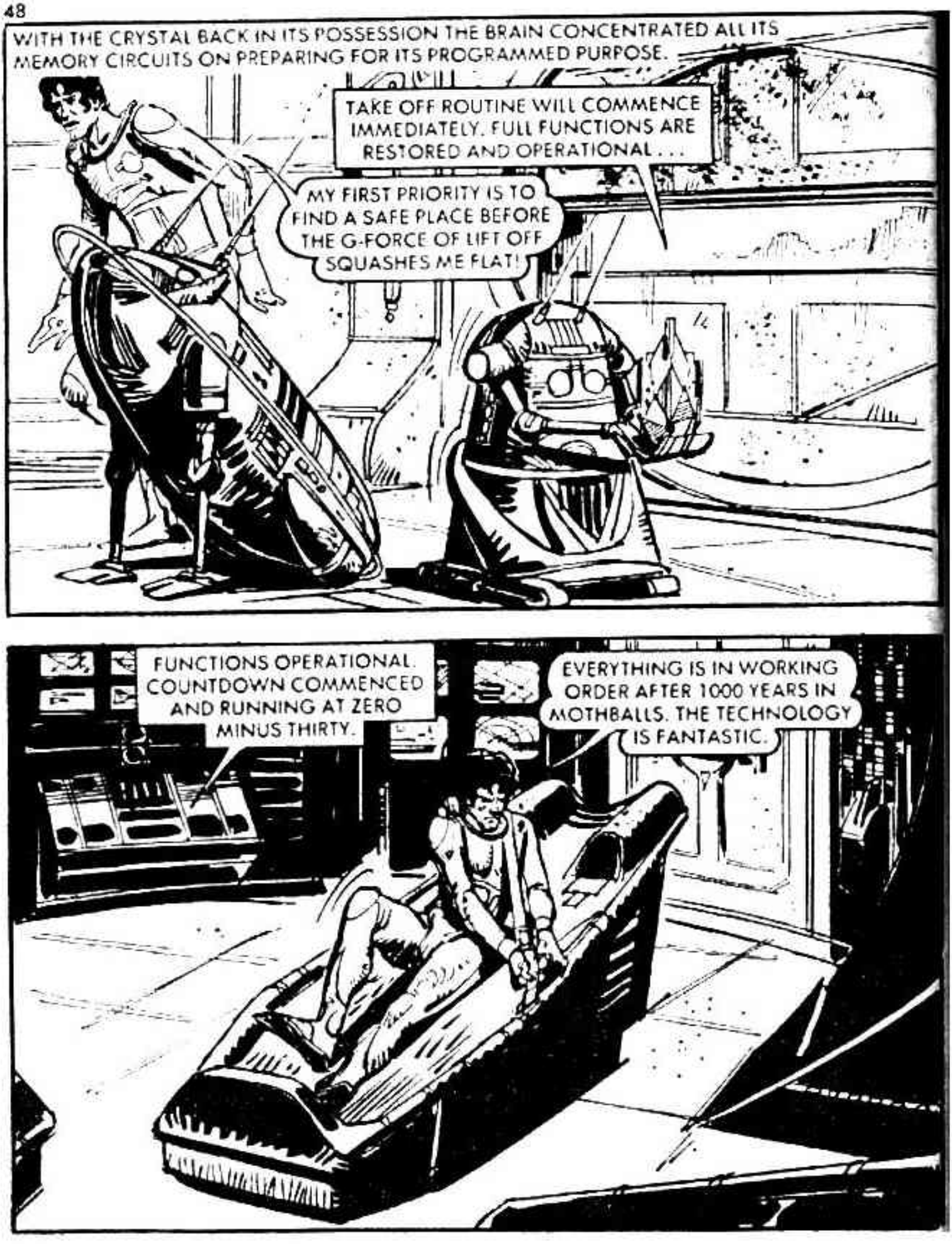
I HOPE THIS BLAST COUCH FLOATS LONG ENOUGH TO GET ME TO THE SPACECRAFT.

eldubyafiodinepoes

AS A TANNO WAS POISED TO THROW A SPEAR, THE SPACECRAFT OPENED FIRE.
IT'S PROTECTING ME . . . OR AT LEAST THE CRYSTAL.
Join our star forums!

WHAT'S THIS? LOOKS LIKE A LIFT!

JIM CLUNG TO THE HOVERGRAB AS IT HEADED FOR THE CRAFT.


WITH THE CRYSTAL BACK IN ITS POSSESSION THE BRAIN CONCENTRATED ALL ITS MEMORY CIRCUITS ON PREPARING FOR ITS PROGRAMMED PURPOSE.
TAKE OFF ROUTINE WILL COMMENCE IMMEDIATELY. FULL FUNCTIONS ARE RESTORED AND OPERATIONAL . . .
MY FIRST PRIORITY IS TO FIND A SAFE PLACE BEFORE THE G-FORCE OF LIFT OFF SQUASHES ME FLAT!
FUNCTIONS OPERATIONAL. COUNTDOWN COMMENCED AND RUNNING AT ZERO MINUS THIRTY.
EVERYTHING IS IN WORKING ORDER AFTER 1000 YEARS IN MOTHBALLS. THE TECHNOLOGY IS FANTASTIC.

THE MONOLITH MOVES . . .

AFTER 1000 YEARS IN THE TANNO MARSHLAND, THE MIGHTY STARSHIP BLASTED SKYWARD.

THE STARSHIP SOON REACHED THE TANNO ESCAPE VELOCITY AND ENTERED DEEP SPACE.
NOW IT IS TIME I TOOK CONTROL OF THIS SHIP AND REJOINED THE ADMIRAL.

ALL CONTROLS ARE PROOFED AGAINST USE EXCEPT BY CORRECT CODE INPUT SEQUENCE. IF YOU DO NOT IDENTIFY YOURSELF CORRECTLY, THE NEXT SHOCK WILL KILL YOU.

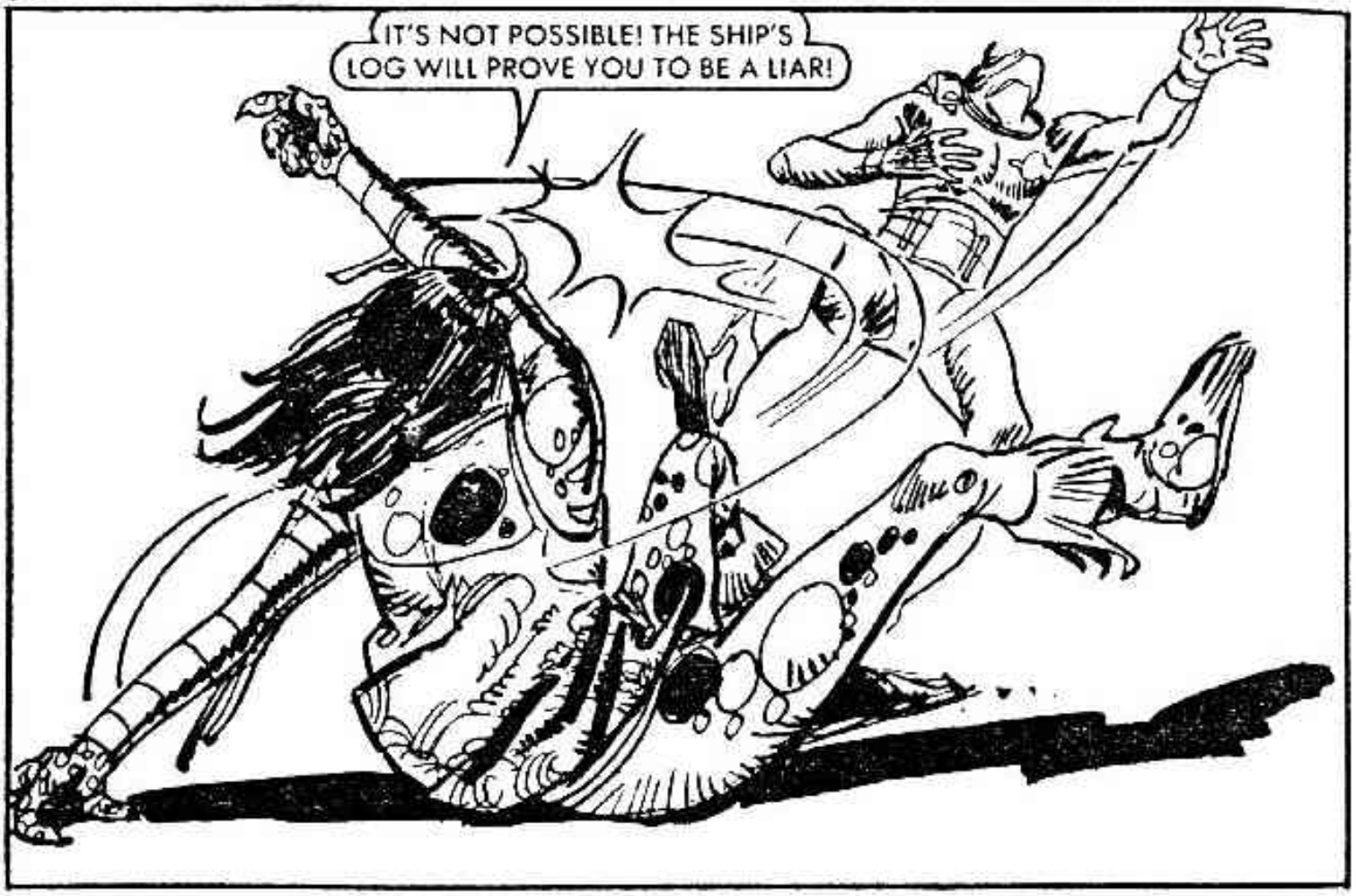
LISTEN HERE . . . I'M THE LIFE FORM THAT GOT YOUR ALL-IMPORTANT CRYSTAL FOR YOU AND I WANT TO KNOW WHERE WE'RE GOING.
LIFE FORM IS OF NO FURTHER USE. MY PRIME PURPOSE TO OBLITERATE SOL III IS ALL AUTOMATICALLY PRE-PROGRAMMED. YOU WILL NOT TOUCH THE CONTROLS AGAIN.
SOL III! THAT'S EARTH. YOU'VE BEEN WAITING 1000 YEARS TO ATTACK EARTH.
INTRUDER! LEAVE THOSE CONTROLS ALONE!
WHERE DID YOU SPRING FROM?

WHERE ARE THE CREW?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED HERE SINCE I ENTERED MY CRYOGENIC CAPSULE?

CALM DOWN!

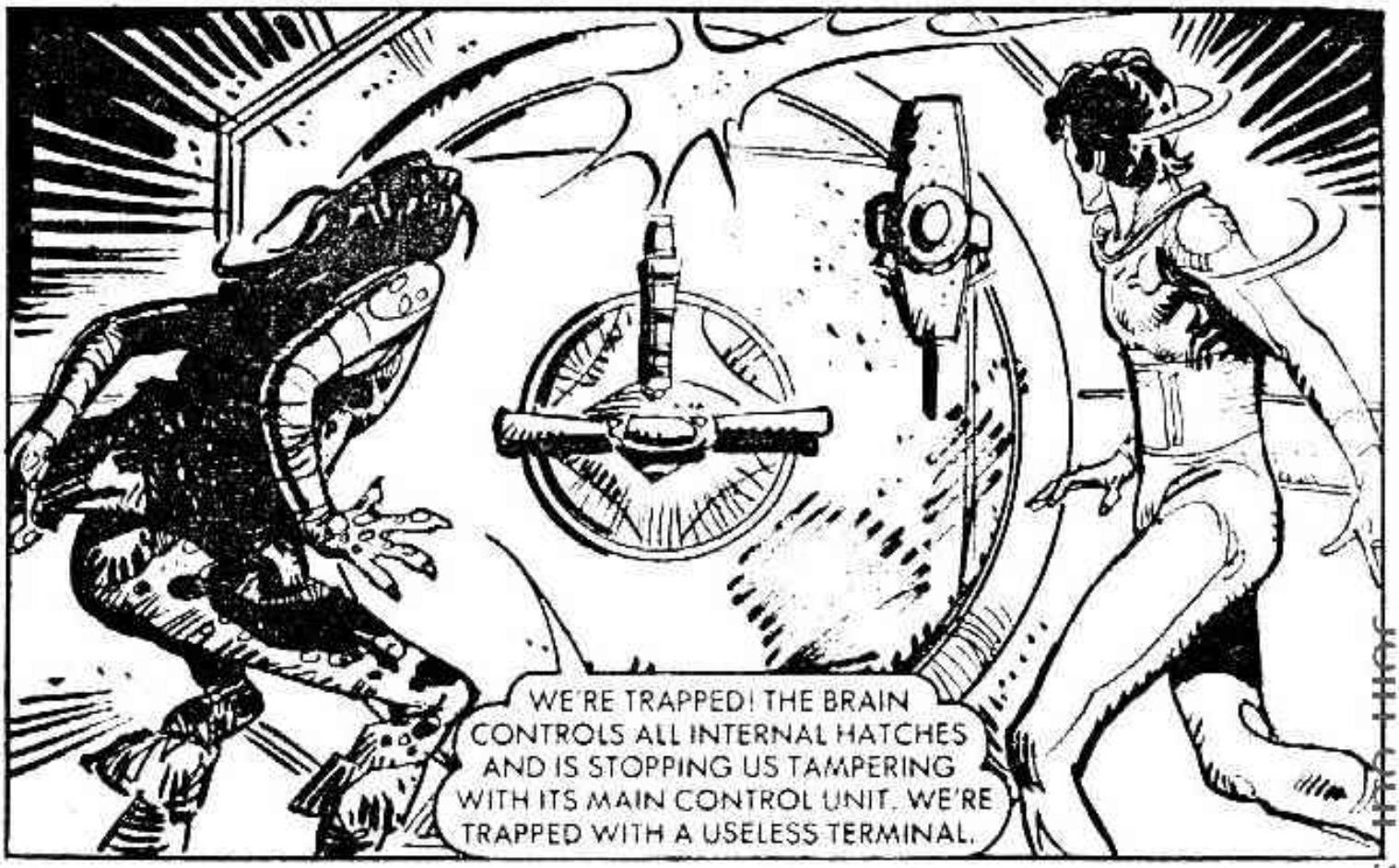
SOMEHOW YOU'VE BEEN IN SUSPENDED ANIMATION FOR 1000 YEARS. THE REST OF THE CREW DIED LONG AGO. YOUR WAR WITH EARTH IS OVER.
YOU LIE! IT IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR ANTANAGUSTA TO LOSE.


IT'S NOT POSSIBLE! THE SHIP'S LOG WILL PROVE YOU TO BE A LIAR!

IT IS TRUE! A PEACE WAS ARRANGED A MILLENIA AGO. WHY WAS I NOT AWOKEN?
YOU WERE CRYOGENICALLY FROZEN BEFORE YOUR SHIP LANDED. SOMEHOW. YOUR POWER SOURCE WAS STOLEN AND THE CREW KILLED.

INDEED! THE LOG INDICATES INTERNAL ATMOSPHERIC CONTAMINATION. WHEN THE CRAFT LANDED AND OPENED HATCHES, ALL THE CREW WERE OVERPOWERED. I AM THE ONLY SURVIVOR.
STOP THE ATTACK ON EARTH. ANTANAGUSTA AND EARTH ENDED THEIR SOLAR WAR A THOUSAND YEARS AGO . . . WE ARE PARTNERS IN GALACTIC PEACE.
OBVIOUSLY A MALFUNCTION HAS PREVENTED THE COMPUTER'S PRIME OBJECTIVE FROM BEING WIPED.

THE BRAIN HAS BEEN PROGRAMMED TO IGNORE ANY STOP INSTRUCTION. THE LAST DYING ACT OF MY COMRADES WAS TO TURN THIS SHIP INTO A MINDLESS WAR MACHINE. EARTH WILL BE DESTROYED.
CAN'T WE STOP IT BY SMASHING THE BRAIN?


WE'RE TRAPPED! THE BRAIN CONTROLS ALL INTERNAL HATCHES AND IS STOPPING US TAMPERING WITH ITS MAIN CONTROL UNIT. WE'RE TRAPPED WITH A USELESS TERMINAL.

WE'LL NEVER SHIFT THIS. IT'S SOLID.
THE ONLY HATCHES WITH MANUAL OVER-RIDE ARE THE EXTERNAL ONES. THAT WOULD BE TOO DANGEROUS TO TRY.

JIM DECIDED TO TRY FROM THE OUTSIDE.
THE BRAIN WILL FIND A WAY TO STOP YOU. IT IS AN IMPOSSIBLE MISSION.
WE'LL DIE ANYWAY . . . WHY NOT DIE TRYING TO SAVE OTHERS.

IT'LL BE A LONG WALK.

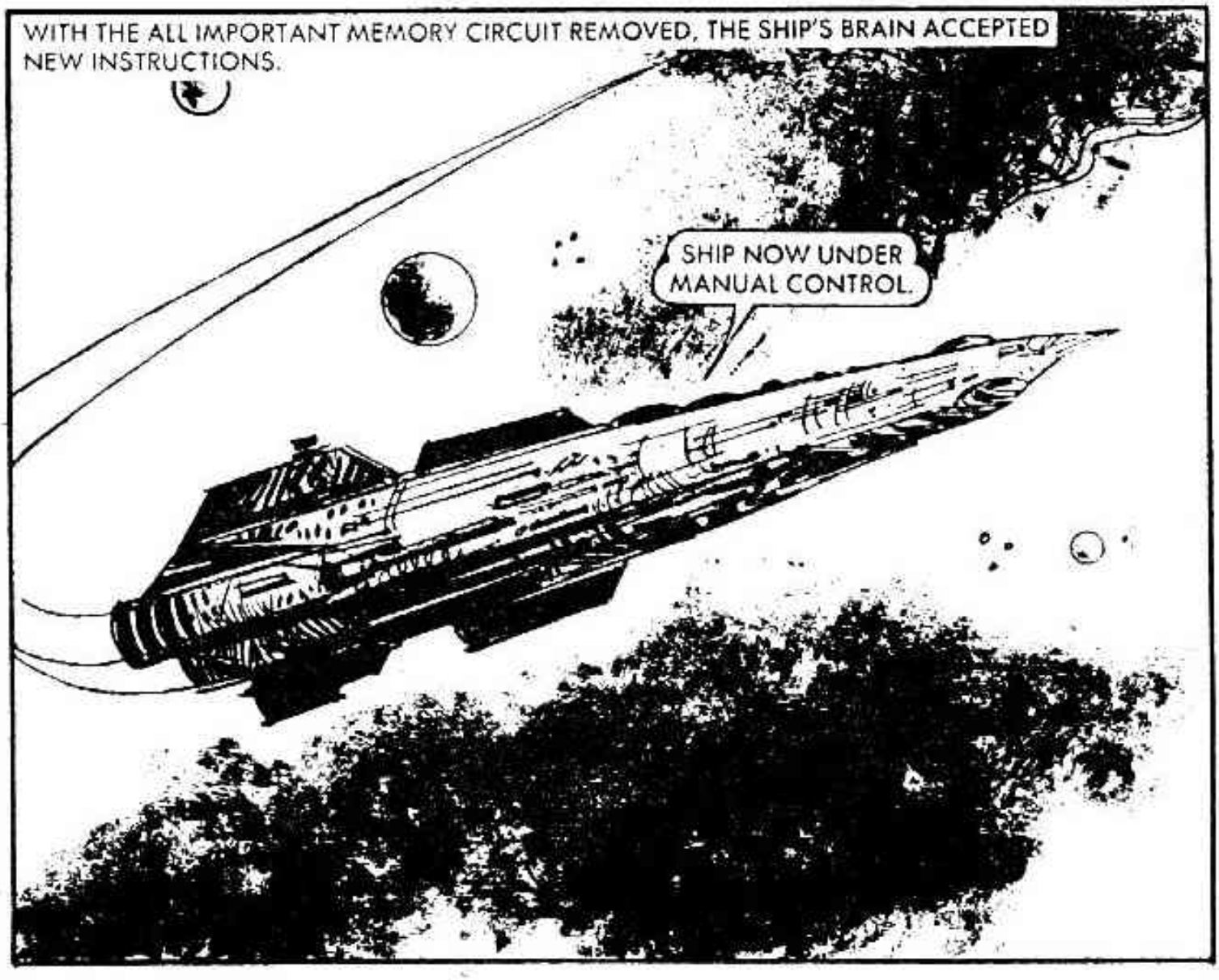
Join our Starfarers Club!

IT'S CUT MY LIFE-LINE!

THE MOMENTUM OF HIS PUSH CARRIED JIM NEARER AND NEARER TO HIS GOAL, BUT THE LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEM WAS FAILING FAST.
POWER GONE. AIR GETTING STALE. SUIT GETTING COLD.

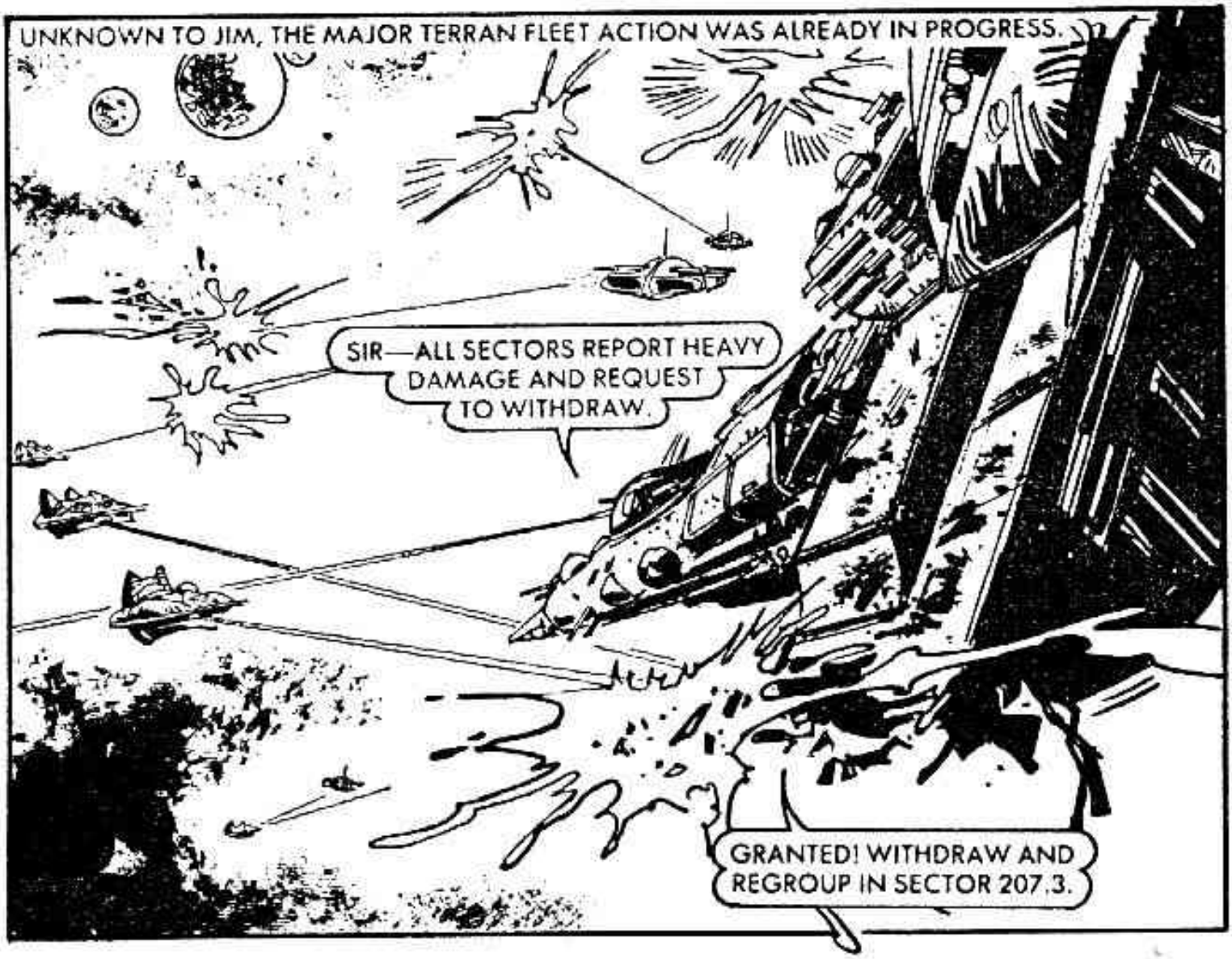
GOT TO FIGHT THE COLD. ONE LAST EFFORT. THAT MANUAL OVERRIDE.
THE MECHANISM INSTANTLY RESPONDED, AND JIM WAS SUCKED INTO THE AIR-LOCK.
THAT WAS CLOSE. I'VE GOT TO FIX THAT BRAIN!
I HAVE TO REMOVE THE CORRECT CIRCUIT FIRST TIME, OR THE COMPUTER WILL KILL ME.
ATTENTION LIFE FORM. THIS IS A PROHIBITED AREA. I AM INSTRUCTING ROBOT UNITS TO REMOVE YOU.

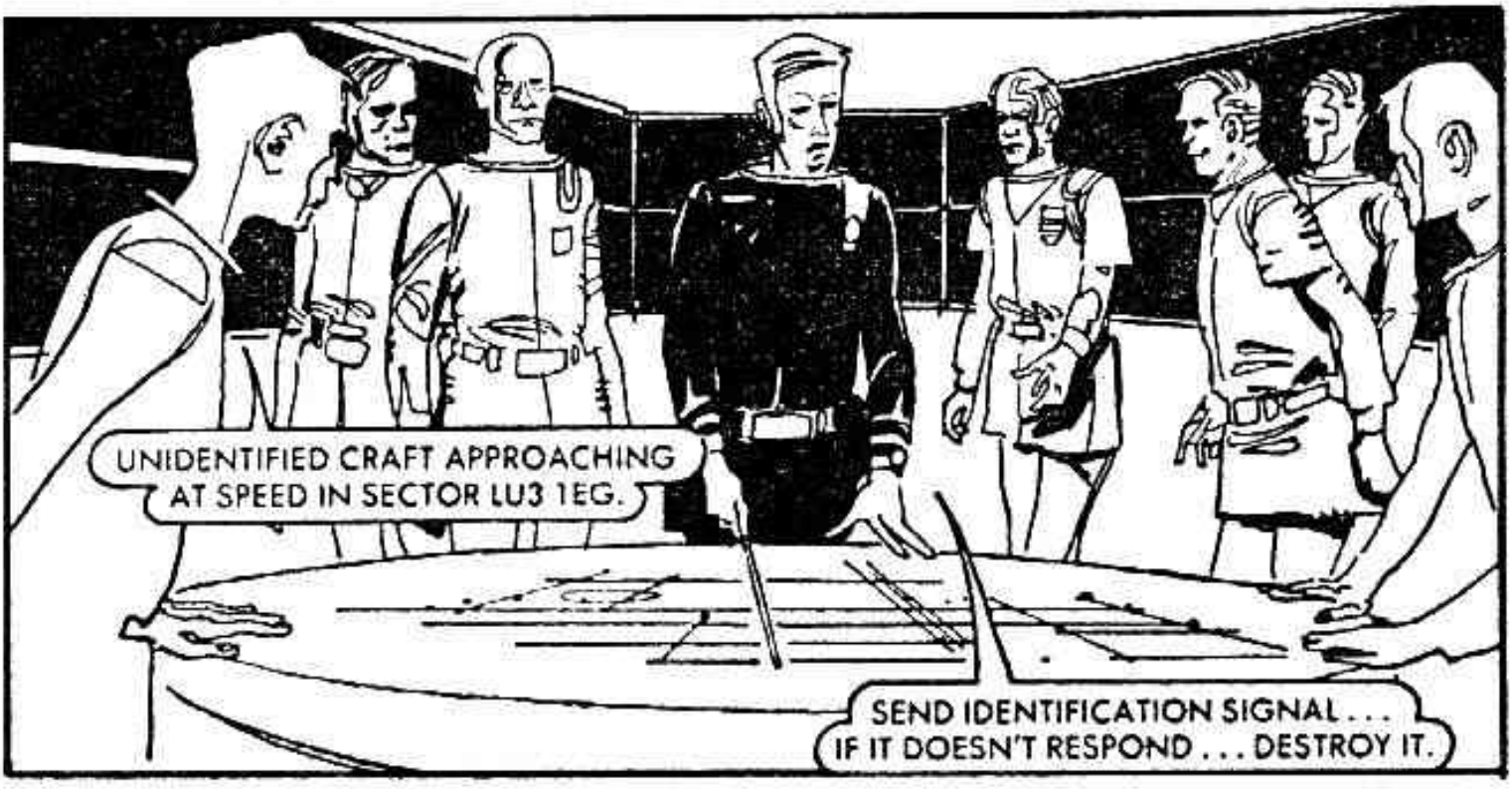
ATTENTION LIFE FORM—THIS IS FINAL WARNING.
THANK JUPE . . . THE RIGHT ONE.
ACTIVATE ROBOTS LIFE FORM MUST BE . . . CLIK! CLAK! . . . PREVIOUS PROGRAMMES AND PRIME OBJECTIVE NOW RESCINDED AWAIT INSTRUCTIONS.

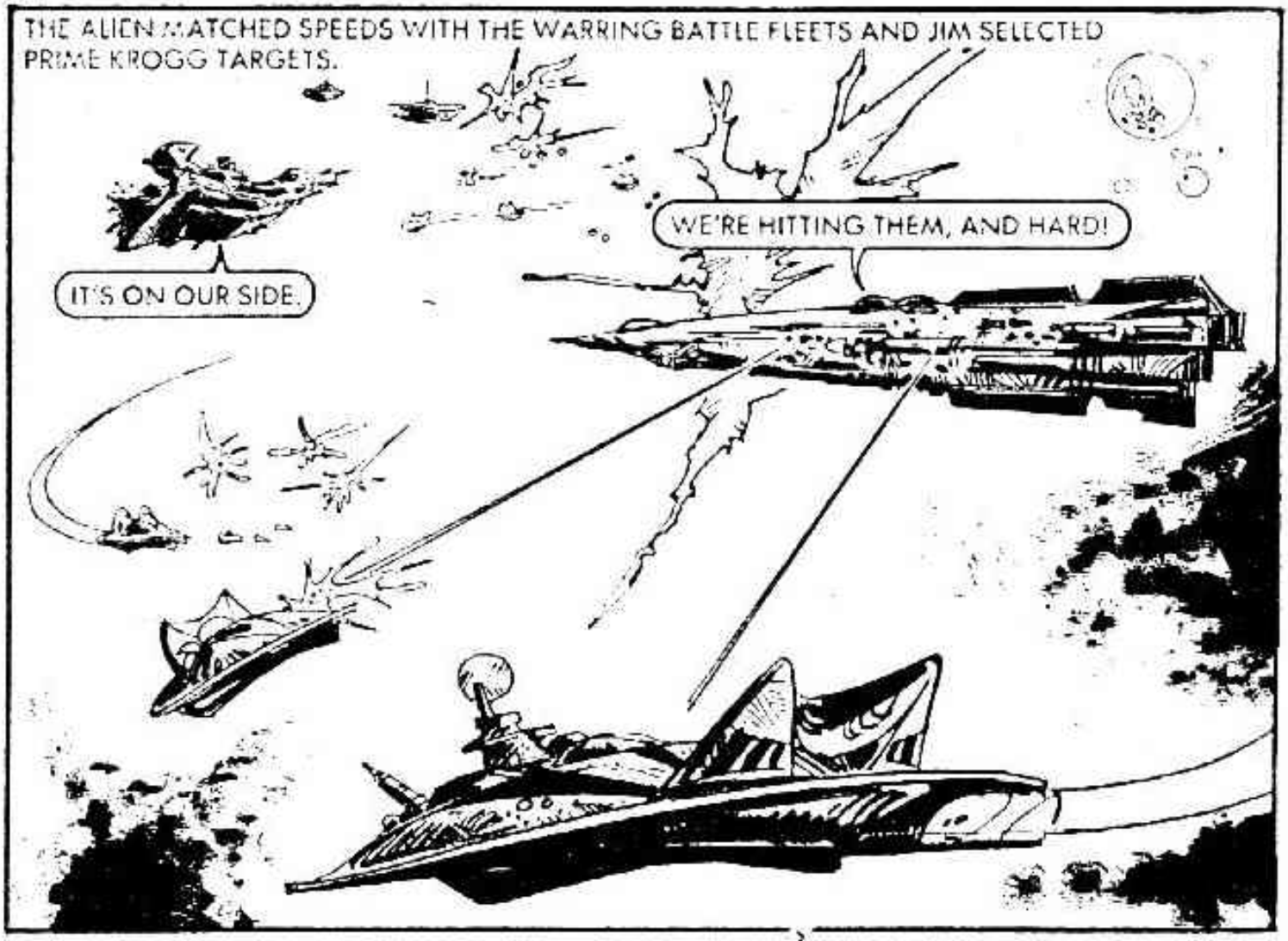

WITH THE ALL IMPORTANT MEMORY CIRCUIT REMOVED, THE SHIP'S BRAIN ACCEPTED NEW INSTRUCTIONS.
SHIP NOW UNDER MANUAL CONTROL.

I HAVE SET COURSE FOR THE ESTIMATED POSITION OF YOUR BATTLE FLEET.
WHILE WE'RE SEARCHING THEM OUT YOU MUST SHOW ME HOW THIS SHIP'S FIREPOWER WORKS.

THE STARSHIP'S WEAPONRY WAS CONTROLLED FROM A CENTRAL TARGET SELECTOR.
AIM AT THE TARGET—THE DISTANCE AND SPEED ARE COMPUTED AUTOMATICALLY. THE COMP WILL THEN FIRE.
IT'S SIMPLE—JUST LIKE A TERRAN VIDEO GAME. NOW TO JOIN THE TERRAN FLEET.

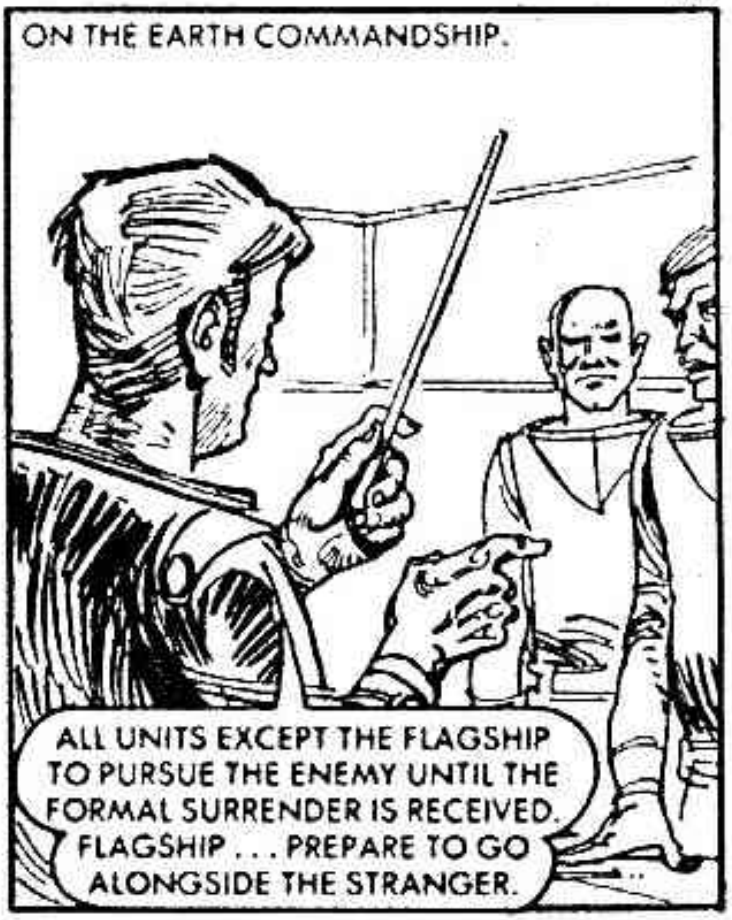

UNKNOWN TO JIM, THE MAJOR TERRAN FLEET ACTION WAS ALREADY IN PROGRESS.
SIR—ALL SECTORS REPORT HEAVY DAMAGE AND REQUEST TO WITHDRAW.
GRANTED! WITHDRAW AND REGROUP IN SECTOR 207.3.


UNIDENTIFIED CRAFT APPROACHING AT SPEED IN SECTOR LU3 1EG.
SEND IDENTIFICATION SIGNAL . . . IF IT DOESN'T RESPOND . . . DESTROY IT.


THE ALIEN MATCHED SPEEDS WITH THE WARRING BATTLE FLEETS AND JIM SELECTED PRIME KROGG TARGETS.
IT'S ON OUR SIDE.
WE'RE HITTING THEM, AND HARD!

THE VAST ANTANAGUSTAN BATTLECRUISER DECIMATED THE KROGG FLEET.
OUR DEFENSIVE SCREENS ON OVERLOAD—ABANDON SHIP!

THE KROGGS HAVE BROKEN FORMATION—THEY'RE RUNNING.


ON THE EARTH COMMANDSHIP.
ALL UNITS EXCEPT THE FLAGSHIP TO PURSUE THE ENEMY UNTIL THE FORMAL SURRENDER IS RECEIVED. FLAGSHIP . . . PREPARE TO GO ALONGSIDE THE STRANGER.

THE KROGG ARE DEFEATED. COME BACK TO EARTH.
PERHAPS I SHALL. BUT FIRST I WILL JOURNEY BACK TO ANTANAGUSTA . . . ALL THOSE I KNEW ARE GONE, BUT I MUST RETURN.

AS JIM NORTON SHUTTLED BACK TO THE ADMIRAL, THE STARSHIP FROM THE CAVERNS OF OBLIVION SET OFF BACK TO ITS OWN PLANET.
THERE HE GOES! HOME FROM THE WAR AFTER 1,000 YEARS. I HOPE HE MAKES IT!

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COME STARBLAZING

with the other

ALSO ON SALE THIS MONTH

STARBLAZERS

IN THE CONQUEST OF SPACE 44

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The surface of the inhospitable planet Venus, was reached on 21st October 1975, by the landing craft of Russian probe, Venus 9. It showed the surface to be rocky and barren. The photograph shows a mock up of craft on the surface of Venus.